ANACONDA TIMES

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Repair, replace, modify combat weapons on post

By Pfc. Abel Trevino
Staff writer

The Small Arms Support Center on LSA Anaconda has only been open for a few weeks, and already the three-person team has helped Soldiers across Iraq repair a variety of weapons, from M-9 pistols to M-2, .50 caliber machine guns and everything in between.

The shop primarily deals with distribution of parts for unit armorers to repair weapons, but will repair and modify weapons on site if requested. Prime examples of in-house repairing and modifying are the modifications done to Mark-19 automatic grenade launchers.

Modifications to the Mark-19 include drilling, replacing worn parts, and installing a modification kit are usually completed in as little as one hour, said Vicki Rasmussen, logistical management specialist.

The modification to the Mark-19 is a great improvement on the overall quality of the weapon.

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Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

Carla and Douglas Carlstrom, a husband and wife team, are two employees at the Small Arms Support Center, work on modifying a Mark-19 automatic grenade launcher to improve its safety and accuracy.

Army scientists, engineers develop liquid body armor for Kevlar

By Tonya Johnson
Army News Service

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — Liquid armor for Kevlar vests is one of the newest technologies being developed at the U.S. Army Research Laboratory.

This type of body armor is light and flexible, which allows soldiers to be more mobile and won't hinder an individual from running or aiming his or her weapon.

The key component of liquid armor is a shear thickening fluid. STF is composed of hard particles suspended in a liquid. The liquid, polyethylene glycol, is non-toxic and can withstand a wide range of temperatures. Hard, nano-particles of silica are the other components of STF. This combination of flowable and hard components results in a material with unusual properties.

"During normal handling, the STF is very deformable and flows like a liquid. However, once a bullet or frag hits the vest, it transitions to a rigid material, which prevents the projectile from penetrating the Soldier's body," said Dr. Eric Wetzel, a mechanical engineer from the Weapons and Materials Research Directorate who heads the project team.

To make liquid armor, STF is soaked into all layers of the Kevlar vest. The Kevlar fabric holds the STF in place, and also helps to stop the bullet. The saturated fabric can be soaked, draped, and sewn just like other fabric.

Wetzel and his team have been working on this technology with Dr. Norman J. Wagner and his students from the University of Delaware for three years.

"The goal of the technology is to create a new material that is low cost and lightweight which offers equivalent or superior ballistic properties as compared to current Kevlar fabric, but has more flexibility and less thickness," Wetzel said. "This technology has a lot of potential."

Liquid armor is still undergoing laboratory tests, but Wetzel is enthusiastic about other applications that the technology might be applied to.

"The sky's the limit," said Wetzel. "We would first like to put this material in a soldier's sleeves and pants, areas that aren't protected by ballistic vests but need to remain flexible. We could also use this material for bomb blankets, to cover suspicious packages or unexploded ordnance. Liquid armor could even be applied to jump boots, so that they would stiffen during impact to support Soldiers' ankles."

In addition to saving Soldiers' lives, Wetzel said liquid armor in Kevlar vests could help those who work in law enforcement.

"Prison guards and police officers could also benefit from this technology," Wetzel said. "Liquid armor is much more stab resistant than conventional body armor. This capability is especially important for prison guards, who are most often attacked with handmade sharp weapons."

Wetzel and his team were awarded the 2002 Paul A. Siple Award, the Army's highest award for scientific achievement.

REPAIR, from page 1

"[The modification kit] makes it a much safer gun, but a much more reliable gun as well," said Douglas Carlstrom, equipment specialist for the SASC. "It's a safe gun to begin with, but that new two-piece cocking lever prevents that out-of-battery firing."

Out-of-battery firing occurs when a grenade shell causes the cocking lever to trigger prematurely. The correction for this is made by replacing the single-piece cocking mechanism with a two-piece cocking lever, which allows for the grenade to travel farther before initiating the firing pin.

The facility has been busy replacing and repairing parts since it's inception at LSA Anaconda.

"In the [short time] we've been open, we've replaced 119 weapons and issued 412 repair parts," Rasmussen said. "We have a full array of small arms parts. We don't do any repairs unless the [direct support] shop requests us to."

The shop offers services that are not limited to post.

"People come from all over," said Rasmussen. "People come in from Baghdad, Mosul; we had a big group come in from [FOB] Remagen."

The services offered are available to unit armorers, as long as they can get to the shop.

"Usually it's the armorer who contacts us. They usually send us an e-mail to make sure we have the parts or the weapons they need before they get in a convoy up here," said Rasmussen. "We don't want to put them on the road without us having what they need."

Most of the requests are for parts to fix weapons systems, although armorers do ask for other assistance.

"Some [armorers] come in and use our tools, some have asked for help. If they don't know how to do something we'll help them," Rasmussen said.

There are two commonly repaired weapons at the SASC.

"The M-2 has actually been rivaling the M-16 for weapons brought in," said Rasmussen.

Future goals of the SASC facility include moving the Army Materiel Command vehicle armoring facility nearby, to create a one-stop area where units and Soldiers coming in from convoys can get their vehicles armored and replace or repair damaged weapons.

Army moves up fielding of future combat systems

By Gary Sheftick
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army plans to accelerate the fielding of some Future Combat Systems such as armed robotic vehicles, unattended ground sensors and unattended munitions.

The Army is taking advantage of leaps and bounds in wireless technology to "spiral" FCS development, said Lt. Gen. Joseph L. Yakovac, military deputy to the assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

"The Army evolves by putting future ideas forward as they become available," Yakovac said.

Army leaders also plan to field sooner, to more of the force, an automation network known as the "System of Systems Common Operating Environment," or SOSCOE. Yakovac likened SOSCOE to the "windows" operating system of a computer, but infinitely larger, and said the network will allow units to "plug and play" the FCS pieces.

"We are basically building the Internet you use every day and moving it into battle space," Yakovac said, adding that it's a challenge to make that network secure, yet accessible by all Soldiers and integrated with all systems.

Future Combat System technology will be inserted into the brigade-sized units of action the Army is establishing, said Brig. Gen. Charles Cartwright, program manager for the FCS UAs. He said one of the UAs will be selected as an "experimental unit" to test all the new FCS technology in 2008. A projected 32 of the 43 UAs will be fielded with some FCS capabilities by 2014, he said.

Over the life of the FCS program (2O25 plus), 15 selected UAs will become FCS Units of Action, Cartwright said. These units will be fielded with all 18 of the Future Combat Systems, he said, and they will have extraordinary capabilities.

The rest of the modular UAs are still slated to receive the network and some of the FCS developments. For instance, the Non-Line of Sight Launch System, or "rockets in a box," as Yakovac called them, are intended to be fielded widely. This pod of missiles can be aimed and fired from miles away.

The unmanned sensors and robotic vehicles are also intended for wide dissemination, officials said. In fact, they said a small unmanned robotic vehicle is already being used today in Iraq and Afghanistan to detect mines.

Part of this week's FCS announcement included "buying back" five of the Future Combat Systems that had been previously deferred. Added back to the FCS list are:

- ☐ Armed Robotic Vehicles (ARV Assault and ARV RSTA [Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition])
- ☐ Recovery and Maintenance Vehicle
- ☐ Intelligent Munitions Systems
- ☐ Class II Unmanned Air Vehicles (medium size)
- ☐ Class IV UAVs (capable of large payloads of both sensors and weapons and able to hover like a helicopter to maneuver up, down and sideways.)

In order to fund the development of the five new systems, the rate of purchase for the eight manned FCS vehicles will be slowed down slightly, officials said. But research and development for all the FCS vehicles will continue on schedule, Yakovac said.

A "demonstration" version of the first manned FCS vehicle, the Non-Line of Sight Cannon, is now being tested at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. The NLOS Cannon vehicle has a 155mm weapon and weighs less than 24 tons.

It's light, but can handle recoil, said Daniel Pierson, who works for the assistant secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology).

The current NLOS Cannon vehicle runs on rubber tracks, but Yakovac stressed that the decision has not yet been made whether the manned FCS vehicles will be tracked or wheeled.

"We're looking to combine the best of both (wheeled and tracked capabilities) in these vehicles," Yakovac said.

Another change announced this week is that all manned vehicles will receive active protective systems. Yakovac said that decision stems from lessons learned in Iraq.

"In a 360-degree fight, everything needs protection," Yakovac said, even support vehicles.

"A lot of capability can be brought to a vehicle by software," Yakovac said. For instance, he said the FCS vehicles will have digital command and control, automatic target acquisition, the Joint Tactical Radio System, and the Warfighter Information System – Tactical, known as WIN-T, and more.

Officials plan to field the first FCS vehicles in 2008 and spiral the development to most of the Army by 2025. In the meantime, the M-1 Abrams tank, Bradley Fighting Vehicle and other current weapons systems will remain important, said Lt. Gen. Benjamin S. Griffin, Army deputy chief of staff for Programs, G8.

Other Future Combat Systems include:

- o Infantry Carrier Vehicle
- o Command and Control Vehicle
- o Mounted Combat System
- o Recon and Surveillance Vehicle
- o Non-Line of Sight Mortar
- o NLOS Cannon
- o NLOS Launch System
- o Medical Treatment and Evacuation vehicle
- o Unattended Ground Sensors
- o Class I UAVs (small)
- o Class III UAVs (fixed-wing)
- o unmanned Countermine MULEs
- o unmanned Transport MULEs

When talking about FCS, Yakovac often refers to "18 systems plus one." The one is the "network," he explained.

The Soldier is going to be "a node in the network," Yakovac said. The guy in the middle is the Soldier … and if we don't do all that we can to make his life better, then we have failed."

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AAFES necessity becomes collectible craze

By Capt. Susan A. Romano
Air Force Link

TALLIL AIR BASE, Iraq, — Since the inception of online Internet auction sites, collectors worldwide have been able to find exactly what they are looking for from the comfort of their own home.

Historically, Americans have been collectors of countless types of things, from stamps and coins to military memorabilia and baseball cards.

One can find virtually anything at an online auction site: false teeth, used socks, even shrunken heads.

Courtesy photo

A sampling of AAFES collectible POGs.

Now, service members have joined the collectible craze with an item that is as common to people deployed here as bottled water — the Army and Air Force Exchange Service pogs.

The pog goes back to the 1920s in Hawaii. A local fruit drink company bottled its product in glass bottles similar to old-fashioned milk bottles. The bottles were sealed with wax-covered paper disks. The company put different pictures on the disks. The juice was a combination of passion, orange and guava fruit — hence the name POG. It was the children playing games with the disks that gave them the name.

The games' popularity spread in the 1930s and 1940s before fading into obscurity. Then, pogs again became a national craze in the mid-1990s.

The exchange service uses pogs in the Middle East out of necessity. Because of weight, the U.S. Treasury Department does not ship coins to the area. So, AAFES officials chose to make their own version of the pog, in denominations of 5, 10 and 25 cents. AAFES pogs are about 1 inch in diameter and feature various military-themed graphics.

Currently, there are three series of AAFES pogs dating back to 2001.

The first was simply the specific denomination as the design.

In 2002, AAFES began issuing pogs with illustrations on them, such as aircraft, rockets and service members in action.

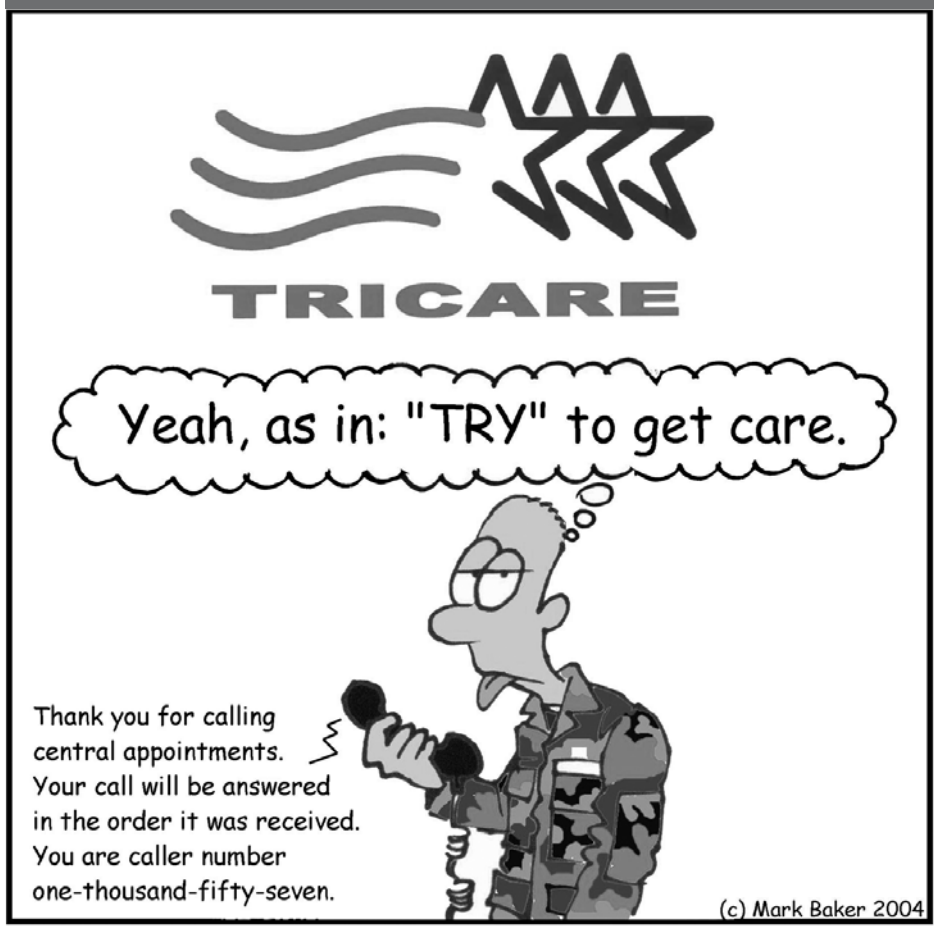
Pogs issued in 2003 have the year stamped on them, while those made in 2002 do not.

Each denomination has 13 different designs.

Although AAFES officials said they never intended the pogs to become a collectible item that is exactly what has happened.

Service members are saving the cardboard circles as souvenirs of their tours of duty or as additions to their personal collections of military memorabilia.

Pvt. Murphy's Law



ARMY OF ME

by Aaron Thacker
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We cannot all be friars, and many are the ways by which God leads his own to eternal life. Knight-errantry is a religion.

--Cervantes

Left Shoulder Diary

30th Medical Brigade

Compiled from
Unit History

The 30th Medical Brigade shoulder sleeve insignia is characterized by a maroon rectangle arched at the top and bottom with a one-eighth of an inch white border two inches in width and three inches in height.

A white sword entwined by a gold serpent grasping a gold star in its jaws is set in the center.

The maroon and white of the insignia are traditionally associated with the Medical Corps.

The upright sword symbolizes military preparedness and is entwined by a serpent alluding to the staff of Aesculapius and a heritage of medical service.

The star represents the state of Texas, where the 30th Medical Regiment was first activated.

The insignia was authorized Dec. 10, 1993.

The 30th Med. Bde. was constituted into the regular Army as the 30th Medical Regiment Oct. 1, 1933, in Texas.

The unit was re-designated as the 30th Medical Group Sept. 8, 1943. With the advent of World War II, the unit was transferred to Liverpool, England, in 1944 and left there for Omaha Beach.

After the war, the group served in a training status at Camp Swift, Texas, Camp Polk, La., and Fort Benning, Ga. It was inactivated at Fort Benning in 1949.

The group was then reactivated in Korea March 25, 1953, where it coordinated the operations of all medical units in the 8th Army area, as well as providing primary medical and dental care and evacuation for United Nations troops.

For its outstanding work during the Korean campaigns, the group was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation along with campaign participation credit for Third Korean Winter and Korea, Summer 1953.

In 1955, the group was transferred to the U.S. Army Europe, assigned to 7th Army and stationed at what is now Landstuhl Army Medical Center.

The group was attached to Headquarters, 7th Medical Brigade, thus becoming an original part of the U.S. Army's first medical brigade.

The group deployed in December 1990 in support of Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, and redeployed back to Germany in early May 1991.

For its efforts, the unit received campaign participation credit for Defense of Saudi Arabia and Liberation and Defense of Kuwait.

The 226th Medical Logistics Battalion, just one unit in the 30th Medical Brigade, is currently assigned to LSA Anaconda. The 226th Medical Logistics Battalion is supplying Soldiers with medical supplies to include blood products , optical fabrication and maintenance of medical equipment.

Civilians of the Week

Regina Koenig, Barbara Brown, Jack Lauff and Irene Panter

Four Army and Air Force Exchange Service employees were recognized for heroism in the line of duty during a ceremony at the post exchange here July 28.

Barbara Brown from Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, Jack Lauff from AAFES headquarters in Dallas, Regina Koenig from Fort Drum, New York and Irene Panter from Hill Air Force Base, Utah were working in the LSA Anaconda main store when a rocket struck near the building causing numerous injuries. According to the certificate presented by Brig. Gen. James E. Chambers, the 13th Corps Support Command and LSA Anaconda Commanding General, Brown, Lauff, Koenig and Panter administered first aid, helped evacuate the injured and led uninjured patrons to the safety of the building, without regard to their own safety.

Three soldiers were killed and 23 other people were injured as a result of the attack.

Some of the casualties owe their recovery to AAFES employees, said Chambers. "The ability to react and take care of people is a human quality not everyone has."

How to shoot a falling star

By Sgt. Annette B. Andrews
Editor

Capturing a shooting star is easy by following a few basic principles: the easiest way is with a 35mm single lens reflex or SLR camera, or a digital camera. Which ever camera is used must have a setting for taking long exposures.

The camera must have a B (bulb) or T (time) setting for taking time exposures. Digital cameras might be able to do this in manual setting. It is necessary to have a cable release and a tripod or a very stable surface to place the camera upon to limit camera shake. The recommended lenses are those between a wide angle and 55mm lens. Lenses larger than 55mm will capture too small an area of sky.

Set the equipment up in as dark a place as possible, away from lights or it will ruin the pictures. After setting the camera up make sure the aperture is wide open. Some people know this as the F-stop, so set it to the smallest number possible. Having the shutter wide open will gather more light and pick up fainter meteorites.

Also make sure the camera is set to B or T for time exposures. The focus of the lens, or distance, should be set to infinity.

Next, aim the camera toward the constellation Perseus, that's in the eastern sky. The camera must be very still once the shutter is opened. Without a tripod, securely prop the camera on a stable surface so the viewfinder is still useable. Depress the cable release and lock the shutter open for about 20 to 30 seconds, maybe more. When the time is up, release the cable to end the exposure. Remember that the camera must not move while the shutter is open. How long the shutter is left open depends a lot on how dark the skies are. Basically, the more light pollution there is, the shorter the exposures time. Excess light will make meteor trails difficult to see.

Use 400ASA film speed; it is fast enough to record the night images, but not so fast that it would be too grainy. Slower speed films will need longer exposures but are clearer, and the sky must be really dark.

Taking some test photos will demonstrate how well that film speed will work in this area. So perform test shots a night or two before the Perseids peak, experiment with film and find a good place to set up. Try a variety of exposure times starting with 20 seconds and working up five seconds at a time. Some exposures work best up to three and four minutes.

Be sure to write down the specifics of each exposure (image number, film speed, exposure time,) to decide which exposure is best for the main event. If all goes well there should be star trails across the exposures shot over 15 seconds. The longer the exposure, the longer the trails will be due to the rotation of the planet.

Some meteors are much brighter than others. If very bright meteors or fireballs cross the area of sky the camera is filming, end the exposure after it passes or the new bright light could ruin the exposure.

Try including some of the horizon, trees or rock formations in the images because it will produce more interesting pictures, and will provide a better perspective for viewers. Avoid recording identifiable installation landmarks.

Let the company or clerk that is developing the film know that these are night images of stars and will be dark, otherwise they may try overexposing the film to get an image.

Even if capturing the event on film is not a priority it could be worth watching an hour or so of stars raining down from the heavens.

Army nurse provides care for patients

By Sgt. Ann Venturato
Assistant editor

When the doors of the emergency room open the ER team is ready to respond. They welcome the patient with compassion and move him or her to the treatment area.

Capt. Olivia Angeles, an Army nurse, or one of the other members of the emergency room grabs a clipboard, the admission paperwork and gets some patient history while another member of the team takes the patient's temperature and blood pressure.

Photo by Sgt. Ann Venturato
Angeles, an Army nurse, administers medication to an Iraqi national guard soldier July 30.

Photo by Sgt. Ann Venturato
While getting the medication ready for adminstration for an Iraqi national guard soldier, Angeles calls in to report the administration of medication.

"What happens here (in the emergency room) is that we see patients for sickcall and then as trauma goes, we fix them up," Angeles said.

It is all about teamwork in the emergency room, because a single person can't take care of a trauma patient by themselves, Angeles said.

The mission at the emergency room is to get the patient in and out of here as quickly as possible, Angeles said.

During her shift on July 30, Angeles and other members of the emergency medical treatment team helped a KBR employee with a severe headache; performed an electrocardiogram on a sergeant for his physical for drill sergeant school; applied a splint to the leg of an Iraqi national guard soldier and looked at a Soldier's broken toenail.

"It's not always trauma and blood" Angeles said. "When we work, we work; when it is down time, it's down time."

Angeles starts her work day at seven in the morning and works until seven at night.

She usually works two days and has a day off before she works another two days.

"Here, I am truly an Army nurse. I am here to help people," Angeles said.

"I feel it is my obligation to make them (the patients) feel safe," said Angeles, who has compassion for every patient who comes into the emergency room here.

"The people in the emergency room call me Mo [short for Maria Olivia] and the patients call me Angel," she said.

Angeles has experienced a different aspect of emergency room medicine since arriving on LSA Anaconda.

The team in the emergency room here has seen its fair share of traumas due to improvised explosive devices and mortar attacks so they enjoy the days when they don't have to treat a trauma patient who has come into the emergency room because of an improvised explosive device or mortar attack.

"Because back in the states you won't see rocket propelled grenades," Angeles said, who has treated a lot of trauma patients in the emergency room at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

"Since I have been here it has never been this slow. So we are thankful," Angeles said.

Although the emergency room was slow on that day, the emergency room team stayed ready to spring into action at a moments notice to provide lifesaving trauma care to whoever was in need.

"My heart is here in the ER," Angeles said. "I believe my purpose here is not to be just a nurse and Soldier, but to be something else too."

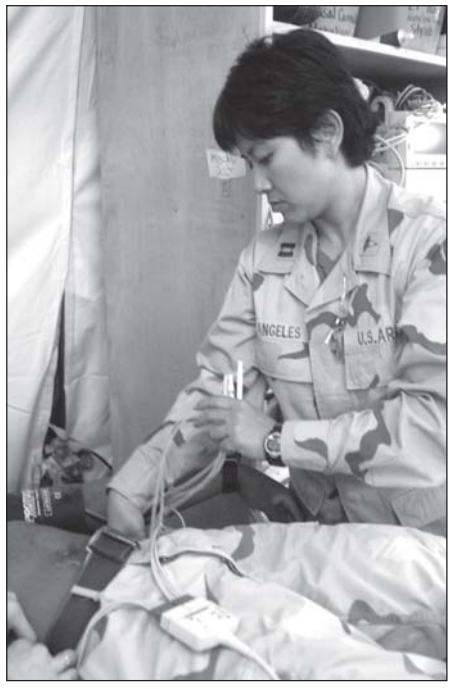


Photo by Sgt. Ann Venturato
Angeles assists in setting up the electrocardiogram leads for an EKG on a sergeant who needs a EKG for his physical packet for going to drill sergeant school.

Capt. Olivia Angeles is from Company A, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and is part of the life saving team at the 31st Combat Support Hospital Emergency Medical Treatment Center.

Courtesy photo
Capt. Olivia Angeles and other members of the emergency room work on a trauma patient at the 31st Combat Support Hospital July 5.

Marines assist in operations, forward operating base build-up in Operation Iraqi Freedom

Marines and Sailors from 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing arrived at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq, more than three weeks ago to assist the 1st Marine Division with the build-up of a strategic forward operating base.

According to Gunnery Sgt. Alain Vargas, staff NCOIC Support Squadron 273, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd MAW personnel here, the airfield was not equipped with enough space the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit would need when they arrive.

"When we got here, the site had less than half the number of (landing) spots the MEU would need to operate," said the 35-year-old Miami native. "Since arriving, we have built the number of helicopter spots needed and continued to improve the airfield on a daily basis."

Lt. Col. Ross E. Scanio, the FOB air boss and camp commander, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd MAW, said the Marines have been hard at work preparing the entire site for the arrival of the MEU.

"The Marines of MWSS-273 have been working around the clock to prepare this zone so it can support the 24th MEU," said the 40-year-old Chicago native. "We are going to turn over a fine product to the MEU when they arrive on deck."

Photo by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer

Cpl. Lacy A. Spry, heavy equipment operator, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, lifts a load of dirt with a front-end loader while digging a fighting position at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq, July 10.

According to Vargas, the Marines pressed on with their mission of improving the existing airfield, knowing the enemy would try anything to prevent them from carrying out their duties.

"We knew that security was always the issue due to the proximity of a main supply route," Vargas added. "But these Marines have done an outstanding job with their tasks and have accomplished all of their missions with minimal personnel and under constant threat of attack."

Vargas added the Marines have not let the increased tempo bring them down; instead, it has helped them to form a closer bond because of the size of the detachment.

"They are doing something different and at a much faster pace than what they would be doing at (the air base in) Al Asad (Iraq)," he said. "Because this is a smaller group of Marines, they know there's no time here for slacking off."

Kalsu is also important to the safety of the Marines re-supplying other FOB's.

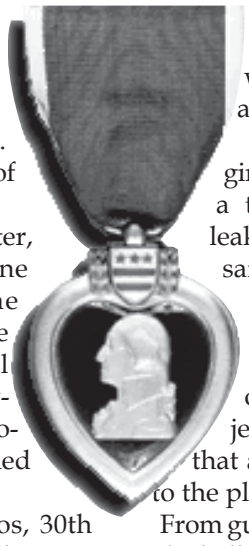
"The expansion of this FOB is important so the (CH-53E Super Stallion Helicopters) can fly into here and re-supply the Marines on the ground," he said. "The CH-53 is essential because flying supplies in is safer than convoy (operations) in this area."

Staff Sgt. Richard Q. Quinata, assistant air boss, MWHS-3, has assisted in building more than one FOB since arriving in Iraq in February and said he has been engaged in more activity here than any of the other sites.

"This is the busiest FOB I have been at since March," said the 28-year-old San Diego native. "I have done more work here in two weeks than I did at any of the other sites I have been to."

Marine Corps News Service

WW II veteran recieves Purple Heart after 60 years



A 24-year-old navigator was wounded during a bombing mission over Germany on Sept. 13, 1944, at the height of World War II.

Nearly 60 years later, retired Lt. Col. Wayne Ehlers received the Purple Heart he earned when shrapnel flew through his oxygen mask, cut his microphone line and smashed into his chin.

Col. Frank Gallegos, 30th Space Wing commander, presented the medal to Ehlers in a formal ceremony at Vandenberg Air Force Base July 26.

Marie Ehlers, the colonel's wife of 56 years, was on hand for the celebration.

In 1944, Ehlers flew on a B-17 bomber with the 526th Squadron from the 379th Bombardment Group out of England.

The day of his injury, he was flying on his 24th mission. An oil refinery was the target.

"We were trying to keep them from producing again and I think we did a pretty good job because the Germans were certainly running out of fuel," Ehlers said.

Escorted by P-51 and P-47 fighter aircraft, Ehlers' bomber, "Everybody's Baby," was flying over its target at 27,000 feet when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire.

"We had two engines knocked out and a third engine was leaking oil," the colonel said.

The crew completed its mission dropping its bombs on target and then jettisoned everything that added extra weight to the plane.

From guns and ammunition to the ball turret on the underside of the airplane, the crew tossed everything they could to help the plane stay aloft as it headed for Brussels, Belgium.

The pilot and co-pilot were strapped in up front while the rest of the crew was crouched down in the radio area at the back of the plane, Ehlers said. Not sure where the front lines were, the B-17 crew landed wheels-up in Ciney, Belgium.

After tearing though two fences and several cow pastures, the plane finally came to rest on top of a third fence.

"We found out when we got down there, the Germans had left five days before," Ehlers said.

Near the French-Belgian border, the crew made its way to an Army hospital where their wounds were treated.

A few days later, they stuck out their collective thumbs and hitchhiked to Paris on a weapons carrier.

"It was a little hairy at times," Ehlers said, "but we got through it in good shape."

He went on to complete 30 missions in Europe and returned to the United States to become a navigation instructor.

Today, the Ehlers live in Camarillo, Calif. They stay active through volunteer work.

Air Force News Service

Photo by Airman 1st Class Bernice Suarez

Retired Lt. Col. Wayne Ehlers wears the Purple Heart that was presented to him July 26 for being wounded in combat nearly 60 years ago while flying over his target in Germany during World War II.

Mobilized Soldiers set re-up pace

Army National Guardsmen who have seen the worst of war are re-enlisting in the military at a higher rate than those who haven't been mobilized, officials said July 29.

"Retention is higher in the units that have been mobilized than across the force, and across the force it is high," said Brig. Gen. Frank Grass, deputy director of the Army National Guard.

In an average year, the Army Guard sees about 18 percent of the force retire or separate.

For fiscal year 2004, officials estimate that only about 14 percent of mobilized units will leave, and 16.9 percent of the overall force will depart.

Grass said exit interviews from Soldiers demobilizing indicate the guardsmen really do consider themselves a "Band of Brothers."

"Part of what's happening here is this team that used to see each other one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer, have just come together," Grass said. "Many of them have fought in combat side by side, and they come back and that relationship that they've built is key to them staying in."

Grass said the reception the Soldiers get from the people is also very important.

He used as an example the 168th Military Police Company of the Tennessee National Guard that is returning home after more than a year in Iraq.

"Every county that they cross from the time they land until they get to their armory there is a welcoming committee," Grass said.

The unit will receive state police and local police escorts.

"All this makes the soldiers feel welcome and the families feel as if their sacrifices are appreciated," he said.

Grass said the two-year limit on mobilizations is also important.

The Army National Guard is aiming for units having one deployment every six years.

Grass said there are other policy changes in the works that will aid in reserve component retention.

One such change is the continuum of service policy. This will allow a Soldier to change status more easily. A Soldier could be in the National Guard and move to active duty.

Upon redeployment, he or she could go back into the Guard or move to the Individual Ready Reserve.

Grass said this would help break down barriers among the components.

American Forces Press Service

Air Force officers work as engineers by day, compete on rifle team by night

Everyone has heard the old idiom, "like shooting fish in a barrel." Two engineers at Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif., have revised it to, "like shooting a dime at 164 feet."

Capts. Mark Gould and Robin Orth, assigned to the Space and Missile Systems Center, are on the Air Force International Rifle Team.

The team competes against other military and civilian teams in matches at local, state, national and international levels.

The captains are very prominent in the Air Force rifle community, having set 11 Air Force records between them this year.

"We've taken the 300-meter records and just destroyed them," said Gould who works in the center's space superiority system program office and serves as the team's captain. "Between us and (a lieutenant), we now have all 300-meter records with the exception of one, and those were standing since (1987 and 1988)."

Just competing, let alone setting records, takes meticulous precision and accuracy.

"I don't think there's a sport out there that demands so much precision," Gould said. "Medals are won and lost in hundredths of a millimeter. It's just very, very precise."

In the three-position rifle event, competitors fire .22 caliber small-bore rifles from prone, standing and kneeling positions at targets 50 meters away. The bull's-eye is 10.4 millimeters in diameter.

Shooting at a dime-sized target 164 feet away might seem difficult enough, but throw in the hours of endurance it takes to compete in a match, and the task is even more daunting.

"A three-position match will run three and one-half to four hours of on-the-line, strapped-into-the-rifle shooting," Gould said. "That's a long time to keep your concentration up, not get distracted."

Throughout the four hours, competitors need to remain focused and exacting.

"Imagine at 50 meters, hitting a dime down there every time — that's what you need to do," said Orth who works with space-based radar at the center. "In 120 shots, close to 100 shots have to hit that dime. Matches are going to be won and lost if one of those shots is a hair off."

After a shooter gains the endurance and precision skills required to compete, he or she will still face several obstacles.

"Keep in mind, this is done outside, in the weather," Gould said. "You've got to deal with wind and light changes affecting where the bullet is going to hit. It's all done with iron sites, there's no scope, there's no magnification, there's no telescopic aiming involved; it's all done with just the eyeball lining up the sights; and it's all unsupported, off the shoulder."

Gould said to be competitive it takes rigorous and constant practice.

He said he is seriously considering the Air Force's World Class Athlete Program in 2006, which will allow him to train fulltime for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

"Training for the Olympics is part of what our charter is, it's part of why this team exists — to put people on the national team, to put people on the Olympic team," he said.

Orth has not decided on his Olympic future yet, but remains active on the Air Force team.

He began his shooting career when he was 10, and was also a member of the Air Force Academy shooting team, while Gould took interest in the sport more recently.

"I started at 22 when I was enlisted at Minot (Air Force Base, N.D.). I checked a book out from the library on position rifle shooting, because the picture on the cover was cool, and read it. I found out it's a sport that appeals to me," he said.

He said he enjoys the sport because it requires maintaining a high level of concentration for long periods of time.

"To succeed, every shot must be executed the same way, every time," he said.

Orth stressed the cognitive dexterity involved in the sport also.

"Once you get to a certain level, everything after that is all mental," he said. "You can only go so far physically, but if you don't have your head in the game, forget it. It's more of a mental game than a physical game."

Air Force News Service

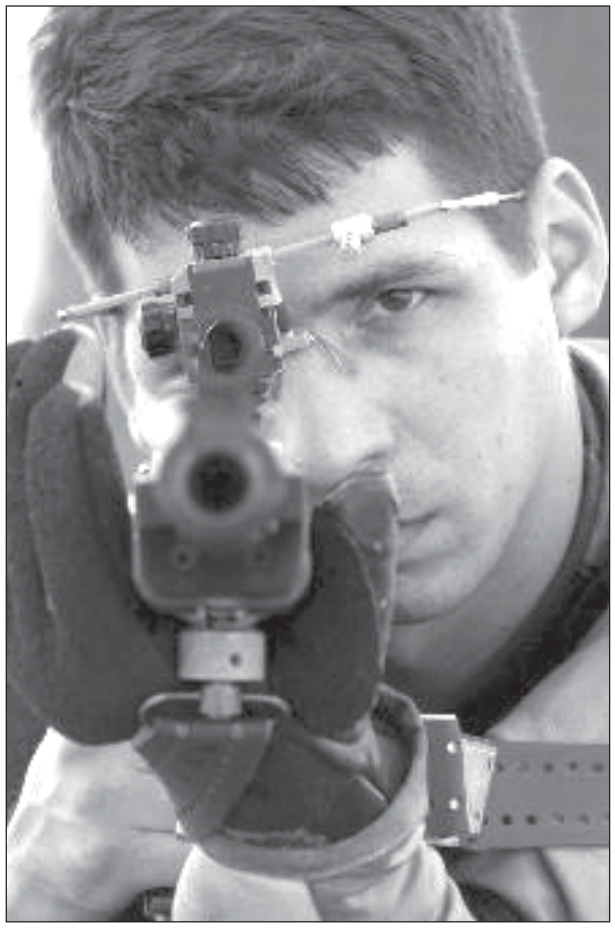


Photo by Jason M. Webb

Capt. Mark Gould takes aim during shooting practice. He is captain of the Air Force International Rifle Team and assigned to the Space and Missile Systems Center's space superiority system program office at Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif.

Marines patrolling border cool off with new use for old socks in desert heat

Marines from 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion use socks for other reasons than just their feet.

Patrolling the western border of Iraq can take a toll on the Marines and the water is a must for Marines to drink in the hot temperatures that reach well over a hundred degrees every day in the summer.

Marines 1st LAR discovered the "sock method" to beat the heat and cool off the water. The story might sound a little ripe - if not the socks. Still, those who use it, would bet their boot, err .. socks, on it.

The first trick is to make sure there's an extra sock in the pack. Socks straight off the feet, even to Marines in the field for days and weeks at a time, are just too funky.

Step two, wet the sock, seal up a plastic water bottle inside and set it in the shade for about ten minutes. The end result is cool and refreshing, at least to a grunt slogging through temperatures topping a hundred degrees.

Photo by Sgt. Jose L. Garcia

Cpl. Robert D. Brooks, 22, an infantryman with 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, uses a sock to cool his water bottle.

"It is a quicker way to cool down when you don't have any ice available to you," said Staff Sgt. Vince Peralta, a 30-year-old platoon sergeant for Weapons Company from Los Angeles. "Using the sock is better than just drinking hot water and there is a huge difference. That's why we always use it."

Marines unfamiliar with the sock method were hesitant at first but once the word got out as the thermometer climbed, everyone's daypack included a spare sock.

"I didn't believe it at first cause it didn't sound like it was real," said Cpl Robert D. Brooks, a 22-year-old from Ypsilanti, Mich. "Then I tried it and it convinced me. It actually works."

If it sounds, well, stinky, Brooks said think about the alternative when the water's been heating under the desert sun.

"Drinking hot water makes you sick to your stomach," he said.

The method itself is nothing new. Desert bags were popular for Marines during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War. The square canvas bags would be filled and soaked on the outside. The idea is the moisture on the outside wicks away the heat as it evaporates. As long as the cloth covering - in this case, the old socks - stays wet, the drink stays cool.

"The key thing to all this is once you pour water on the sock you have to keep it in the shade or else it will take longer to cool down," Peralta said. "But on any given hot day you will catch me using the sock method just so that I can have cold water to drink."

The socks might sounds like a crude method, but it's perfectly palatable to the Marines who use it.

"I love it, cause I don't like hot water at all, even when I take showers I don't like to use hot water," said Lance Cpl. Joshua D. Crawford, 22, from Salem, Ore. "I like to use the sock method after making tea."

According to Crawford, everyone in LAR uses the sock method to cool down water.

"I guess it's an LAR thing," Crawford said.

Some platoons carry ice, but the Marines say the ice melts.

"Ice don't last long in this heat," Brooks said. "So our alternative is the sock method. Once people try the sock method, they stick to it."

Marine Corps News Service

Humanitarian missions work to foster friendship in neighboring villages

Courtesy photo

Sgt. 1st Class Gary Stengel, 852nd Rear Area Operations Center, and Master Sgt. Jack Solorio, 13th Corps Support Command Civil Affairs, demonstrate how to react when attacked from the rear with a knife.

By Pfc. Leah R. Burton
Staff writer

In an effort to make Iraqi villages more self-sufficient, the 13th Corps Support Command Civil Affairs office conducts training for more than 100 Iraqi ex-military personnel and performs Medical Civil Action Projects.

The Civil Affairs staff trains the security and fire personnel in such fundamentals as cover and concealment, positioning with suspects, search tactics, weapons searches, suspect escort, defensive tactics and first aid.

MEDCAPs are missions in which medical personnel treat and educate Iraqi villagers on ways to get and stay healthy.

"I am surprised at how welcomed we are. The children really seem to love us and the children are very gracious," said Air Force Maj. Kristina Miller with the Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility.

The protective training began last year with the 308th Civil Affairs Command, which decided that in order to maintain proficiency on critical skills, the security force must undergo frequent training.

They all received certificates for completing the initial training, and 13th COSCOM G-5 took control of the training program after it replaced the 308th Civil Affairs Command.

"We do it in two hour blocks, and we follow the basic training program that security personnel in the United States would be expected to receive," said Lt. Col. Duane Stanton, operations and public safety officer with 13th COSCOM G-5.

The security force provides emergency service response to Bakr Village, which has about 400 residences occupied by about 3000 people.

Most of the residents of the village were workers on this base before it came under U.S. control. Many former Iraqi Air Force officers and noncommissioned officers live there and work as part of the emergency service force.

"Many of their jobs prior to working for the U.S. were as fighter pilots, and the rest of them were support technicians for the air base," Stanton said.

Personnel volunteered and were selected.

"The chief of security, an ex-MiG fighter pilot, was instrumental in directing the process of selecting people that were productive workers in the Iraqi air force," Stanton said.

Civil Affairs conducts the training because the emergency services personnel are contracted by LSA Anaconda to provide security and fire protection to the village due to their close proximity to the installation.

"It's our desire to maintain a stable, safe environment for the village and maintain a good working relationship between the village and LSA Anaconda. That concern ties directly into the security of not only the village but our own base," Stanton said.

The Soldiers who conduct the training have the appropriate background training to oversee the program.

"For us, it's a great thing to do because our own backgrounds are in public safety," he said. "Master Sgt. Jack Solorio, the primary trainer, worked with the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department. Sgt. Carlos Gonzalez, who started up the refresher training program, worked with the Oakland Police Department."

Stanton is the area commander with the Oregon State Police Department.

Even with the challenges of language barriers and security for the training sessions, the Civil Affairs instructors enjoy providing this training.

"The emergency services personnel are very receptive, very enthusiastic and motivated to learn the training. It's a pleasure and an honor for us to be able to conduct this training with the Iraqi emergency services personnel," Stanton said.

The 118th Medical Battalion periodically takes part in a MEDCAP missions in which they provide treatment for various illnesses and oral hygiene.

"We are making steady uphill progress in improving the quality of life in Iraq," said Col. Nicholas Zoeller, the 13th Corps Support Command Chief of Staff (G-5).

Photo by Staff Sgt. David E. Gillespie

Maj. Bruce Flint, an 81st Brigade Combat Team optometrist examines an Iraqi child's eyes during a Medical Civic Action Project at Bakr Village May 12.

Photo by Staff Sgt. David E. Gillespie

A young Iraqi girl cutches her bottle of medicine during a Medical Civil Action Project in the village of Bakr May 12.

Courtesy photo

Sgt. 1st Class Gary Stengel of 852nd Rear Area Operations Center demonstrates how to neutralize an enemy to the village security chief, Khaled Khadem, with the help of translator, Firas Toama. This training, along with the occasional Medical Civil Action Projects help to rejuvenate the relationships between LSA Anaconda and the surrounding villages. These relationships work to keep the villages and the installation safe.

Movie Schedule

Sustainer Reel Time Theater

Daily Shows: 3 p.m., 6 p.m., and 9 p.m.
(schedule is subject to change)

Aug. 8
3 p.m. Catwoman
6 p.m. The Terminal
9 p.m. Around The World In 80 Days

Aug. 9
3 p.m. Garfield
6 p.m. Around The World In 80 Days
9 p.m. The Terminal

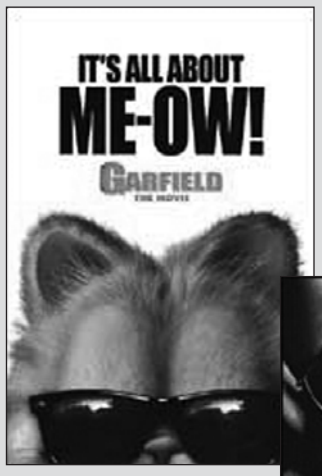
Aug. 10
3 p.m. Catwoman
6 p.m. Garfield
8: 30 p.m. Troy

Aug. 11
3 p.m. The Terminal
6 p.m. Catwoman
9 p.m. Garfield

Aug. 12
3 p.m. Around The World In 80 Days
6 p.m. The Terminal
9 p.m. Catwoman

Aug. 13
3 p.m. The Manchurian Candidate
6 p.m. The Manchurian Candidate
9 p.m. The Manchurian Candidate

Aug. 14
3 p.m. Dodgeball
6 p.m. The Manchurian Candidate
9 p.m. The Chronicles of Riddick



Garfield

The Manchurian Candidate

Weekly Religious Schedule

Protestant-Traditional
Sunday 9 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)
Sunday 9: 30 a.m. 31st Combat Support Hospital
Sunday 10:30 a.m. Sapper Chapel (bldg. 4091)
Sunday 11 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)
Sunday 11 a.m. 185th Aviation Group Chapel

Protestant-Praise and Worship
Sunday 9 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 9:30 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent
Sunday 11 a.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Protestant-Gospel
11:30 Sustainer Indoor Theater
7 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Protestant-Liturgical
Saturday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Church of Christ
Sunday 11 a.m. 1/142nd Chapel Tent

Islamic Prayer
Friday 1:30 p.m. Anaconda Chapel Tent

Protestant-Contemporary
Sunday 7 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Sunday 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Roman Catholic Mass
Sunday 8:30 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent
Sunday 10 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday noon 31st Combat Support Hospital
Monday 9 a.m. PPI Dining Facility
Monday 7 p.m. PPI Dining Facility
Saturday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Latter Day Saints
Sunday 9:30 a.m. Anaconda Chapel Tent
Sunday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Lutheran
Sunday 8:30 a.m. Cherokee Chapel (bldg. 4002)
Sunday 2 p.m. 185th Task Force Tent

Jewish Prayer
Saturday 6:30 p.m. Eden Chapel (bldg. 4148)

Christian Orthodox
Sunday 11 a.m. 185th Task Force Tent

Movie Synopsis for Aug. 8 - 14

Catwoman
PG-13, Action, 104 min
Halle Berry, Benjamin Bratt

Patience Philips (Halle Berry) is excruciatingly shy, quick to take blame, and, more than a little depressed at the end of the day. This comes to somewhat of a screeching halt when Patience inadvertently becomes a human guinea pig for the revolutionary anti-aging product; she not only lands herself in the middle of a corporate conspiracy of gargantuan proportions, but on the city police force's most wanted list. Equipped with a new feline prowess, Patience is a different person come nighttime — more accurately, a catwoman. Patience has gone from doormat to vigilante. Police officer Tom Lone (Benjamin Bratt), has fallen for shy Patience, is determined to apprehend Catwoman and her role in a recent crime spree.

The Manchurian Candidate
R, Thriller, 130 min
Denzel Washington, Liev Schreiber

Director Jonathan Demme and star Denzel Washington team together in this remake of the 1962 political thriller "The Manchurian Candidate," which was based on the novel of the same name by Richard Condon. Washington plays Bennett Marco, a soldier who, along with Raymond Shaw (Liev Schreiber) and the rest of their platoon, is kidnapped by the enemy during the first Gulf War. Back home years later, as Shaw rises to political prominence, Marco begins to remember that they had been brainwashed by their captors, programmed to carry out the wishes of terrorists when triggered by a specific phrase.

Around the World in 80 Days
PG, Adventure, 167 min
Jackie Chan, Jim Broadbent, Steve Coogan

The latest in a long line of adaptations of Jules Verne's classic 19th century novel of the same name, director Frank Coraci's Around the World in 80 Days features an eclectic ensemble cast and a budget that tops $100 million. The film stars Jackie Chan as Passepartout, a thief who is on the run and teams up with Phileas Fogg (Steve Coogan), an adventurer attempting to win a bet that he can travel around the world — using an assortment of transportation methods — in 80 short days. Along the way, the duo encounters an menagerie of colorful characters played by John Cleese, Sammo Hung, Johnny Knoxville, Rob Schneider, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Luke Wilson, and Owen Wilson.

Garfield: The Movie
PG, Comedy, 85 min
Bill Murray, Breckin Meyer

The famous cartoon-strip fat cat Garfield comes to the big screen with this live-action/CGI feature from director Peter Hewitt (The Borrowers). The live action/cpi picture is adapted from the syndicated cartoon strip read in 2600 newpapers and by 260 million readers around the globe. Bill Murray provides the voice of the lasagna-loving feline who finds himself having to rescue Odie, his owner's annoying dog after the pooch is kidnapped by bad guys. Breckin Meyer and Jennifer Love Hewitt appear in the flesh while Alan Cumming, Brad Garrett, Jimmy Kimmel, and Debra Messing provide additional voice talent.

Air Force transports take to open roads

By Tech. Sgt. Brian Jones
332nd AEW Public Affairs

On the frontlines facing the enemy everyday in some of the most dangerous areas in Iraq was not something Air Force transporters were accustomed to hearing, but that was the message from Col. Gary Shick, 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group commander, as he addressed nearly 150 airmen as they entered the final stages of their training in July.

After completing the three-week Basic Combat Convoy Course at Lackland Air Force Base and Camp Bullis, Texas, the vehicle operators arrived here for three days of live-fire convoy training before deploying north to Mosul as part of the 494th Air Expeditionary Force Truck Company. The transporters will replace airmen deployed to Mosul since February 2004.

The final stages of training will incorporate close quarters marksmanship where airmen will fire their M-4s at targets while moving in close proximity to each other. They will also receive familiarization training with weapons such as a .50-caliber and Mark-19 crew served weapons.

The training culminates with live-fire convoy training where the vehicle operators drive a 10-kilometer course and encounter various scenarios like sniper attacks and improvised explosive devices.

"What you do in the next few days will make you one of the best prepared units to go in and do what you're going to do," said Shick.

The training these current airmen are going through has evolved from what the first transporters to deploy into Iraq experienced earlier in the year.

"From our initial training we were able to rely on a lot of lessons learned," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael Taylor, 732nd EMSG Rear Detachment chief enlisted manager and career vehicle operator. "The original training took about six weeks all in the theater. Now, most of the training is conducted at Camp Bullis and the training here has been cut down to less than a week."

The Air Force is training vehicle operators for convoy missions to fill shortfalls the Army has experienced during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The airmen will be tactically assigned to Army units and their training prior to the deployment in the combat zone will prepare them to fully incorporate into those units.

"Once they hit Camp Bullis, they start speaking Army," said Maj. Daniel McGee, 732nd EMSG Rear Detachment commander. "They organize just like the Army and when they fall into their units in Iraq they need to be task organized like the Army and need to speak the lingo."

The new breed of airmen-Soldiers who are currently deployed and those who are preparing to take their place have adapted well to changing the way they normally operate.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Heather Norris

Airman 1st Class Gurtavo Corte and Senior Airman Douglas Thompson inspect their .50-caliber machine gun mounted on a Humvee during a live-fire training exercise on LSA Anaconda July 13.

"You go through your Air Force career and learn leadership skills, but you're never trained to lead airmen into combat," said Taylor. "It's a tribute to our Air Force culture. These airmen can think on their feet and make quick decisions and that hasn't changed in the combat zone."

For many of the airmen, it's taken some time to adjust to their new operating procedures.

"I was a little shocked. I had no idea I'd be doing this," said Airman Lee Webber, a vehicle operator deployed from Moody Air Force Base, Ga., who has only been in the Air Force for six months.

"Sometimes I wake up and wonder if it's all a dream. Sometimes I don't feel like an airman and I don't feel like a Soldier. I just feel military."

"I've been in convoys in Kuwait and in Saudi Arabia, but never in combat. It's a new experience and eye opener for all of us," said Senior Airman James Seay, a vehicle operator deployed from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. "I'm excited and a little scared at the same time. We're all ready to get there and get the job done. We know what we have to do; all that's left now is doing it."

Much of the transporters' training has focused on team building and communication, skills that will be critical to mission success when they hit the ground in Iraq.

"The most important thing we give them is each other," said Chief Master Sgt. Carl Hunsinger, the truck company's top enlisted airman, deployed from Yokota Air Base, Japan.

"They have to know there is always somebody to talk to. They really have to get to know everything about each other so they can tell when there's a problem and be able to get their heads back into the game."

While the airmen's greatest concern in the region will be each other, some also hope their actions will change the way their Air Force specialty is viewed.

"As operators we're trained to be there on-time, every time. We do that on a daily basis and have never really gotten the recognition," said Taylor. "These guys are now even prouder to be airmen and vehicle operators."

"I'm a lot prouder," said Seay. "In the past, people just saw us as bus drivers. Now, I think we'll gain a lot more respect."

Whether or not these combat airmen change the way others view their career field, they are definitely breaking new ground for the Air Force.

"You're doing a good thing for the United Sates of America. You're doing a good thing for the people of Iraq. You're doing a good thing for the world and you're making Air Force history," Shick said.

There are currently about 500 Air Force transporters running convoys in Iraq along with another 200 civil engineers and Petroleum, Lubricants and Oil troops supporting Army ground units.

Is your living area safe? Check it out

By Senior Master Sgt.
William Hodges
332nd ECES Fire Department

You leave your trailer or tent in a hurry to meet friends at the theater. But before leaving, you had heated up a quick bite to eat with an unauthorized electric hot plate. In the rush to get ready, you placed the hot plate on the floor next to the bed and left.

Here's what happens next: The hot plate plugged in or not, can generate

Courtesy photo

Firefighters extinguish a tent fire off Pennsylvania Avenue.

enough heat to ignite materials easier and faster after use in a dry environment. The bedding and blankets hanging off the side of the bed catch fire and are now totally engulfed in flames within the first minute.

Bystanders see the smoke and call the fire department. The bystanders desperately try to extinguish the flames but make no progress because they could not find the fire extinguisher (found later inside, underneath what use to be the bed).

By this time heat and flames spread to the walls, then the ceiling, then the entire area.

The fire department arrives and deploys their hoses just in time to stop the fire from spreading to the neighbor's living quarters.

However, your neighbors were sleeping at the time and their smoke detector did not go off. The batteries were dead.

The super heated gases and smoke from the fire have caused a neighbor to have smoke inhalation and they were transported to the hospital.

Fire prevention is everyone's business. Don't wait for it to happen to you. Be proactive.

Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

Capt. David M. Lang, 118th Area Support Medical Battalion, examines a patient at the Troop Medical Clinic on LSA Anaconda . Lang, a Connecticut National Guardsmen, is a certified physician assistant and a lawyer.

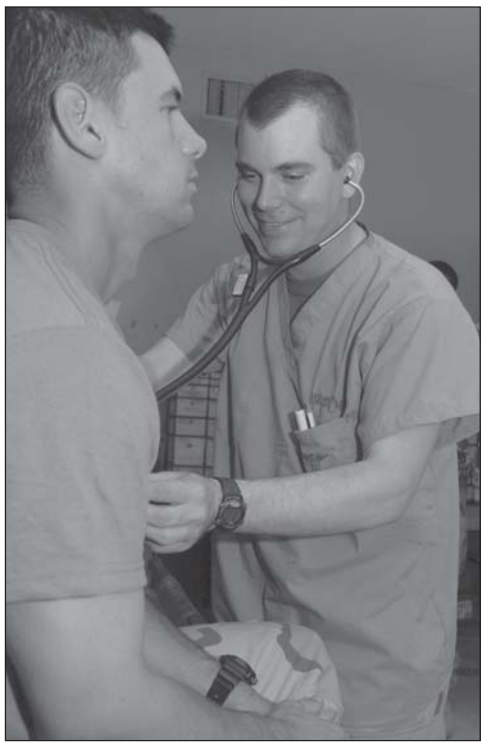


Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

Lang graduated from the University of Massachusettes and went into a career as a physician assistant, while studying to be a lawyer by night. He was activated from the Connecticut National Guard on Nov. 10 and has been at LSA Anaconda since Feb. 28. After this deployment, Lang looks forward to visiting his newborn baby and wife, who is a recent medical school graduate.

Physician assistant, lawyer assists in Iraq

By Pfc. Abel Trevino
Staff writer

At 34 years old, Capt. David M. Lang has accomplished what many people might consider the impossible dream: he's practiced both law and medicine.

"I've had a stethoscope around my neck since 1989," he said.

While working days as a physician assistant, he also attended night classes working toward a law degree to fulfill his interest in law. After completing his law degree, he worked for a law firm in Connecticut specializing in medical malpractice defense and patent laws, Lang explained.

"I did mostly medical malpractice defense for doctors and hospitals being sued," Lang said.

Working closely with hospitals and doctors reminded Lang how much he missed working in the medical field.

"I miss medicine," he said. "I [was able] to work on some interesting things in the medical malpractice [cases], but I miss working and fixing patients."

Debate lingers in Lang's mind about going back to school again. This has brought indecision in his heart, to stay in law upon returning to the United States or to return to medical school and work toward a medical doctorate.

"I want to go back to school, so if I go back it'll be for medicine," he said about a possible career change in the near future. "I think I'll probably go back and work for a little while as a [physicians assistant] and seriously think about going back to medical school."

Here in Iraq, assigned to the 118th Area Support Medical Battalion and working at the Troop Medical Clinic has only reminded Lang of the career he once had.

"[Being here] I realize how much I miss working with patients. The day-to-day job is very rewarding and it's fun. I forgot how much I miss it," he said.

Here he works with people who remind him of the dream he pursued since his teen years, of his days as an emergency medical technician and of his years working in emergency care in the inner city of New Haven, Conn.

"I couldn't ask for a better group of patients and coworkers," he said. "[We have] a good group of medics here, a good group of Soldiers who are very interested and eager to take care of Soldiers and learn."

Photo by Staff Sgt. David E. Gillespie

Lang assists villagers with medical problems on a trip to Bakr Village, just outside the gates of LSA Anaconda.

Education in the workplace is a vital part of the job that Lang longs to return to.

"The thing in medicine is that there is always teaching that goes along with it. There's always that implied role of teaching junior medics," Lang said.

Although Lang is pondering a return to medicine, he is uncertain where to continue his education.

"My wife graduated from med. school and wanted to go back west with her family. So when she graduated, she moved us over there," Lang said. "I haven't even seen the house yet."

"When moving she asked me if I'd like this or that. I said 'Is it burnt orange? Olive drab green? Have bugs in it? No? I'm going to love it," Lang joked.

Throughout his medical career, he pursued an interest in law, and after having experienced what both fields have to offer, Lang feels the future is wide open for him.

Keeping it moblie, medical in 118th

By Sgt. 1st Class
William Appleby
118th Medical Battalion (AS)

From as far North as Balad to as far South as the Kuwait border, medical companies of the 118th Area Support Medical Battalion participated in a Mobile Tracking System Stand-Up exercise.

By sending mobile units to different locations throughout their immediate area of operations, operators in mobile units and the command station were able to refresh their skills and report back with grid locations.

"The purpose of the exercise is to keep the operators' skills refreshed, but we also want the Soldiers out in the field to communicate with each other via the MTS", said Capt. Thomas Strohmeyer, S6, 118th Med. Bn. "The MTS is another tool to communicate with each other and always be in contact with headquarters."

Vehicles equipped with MTS assist unit commanders with convoy coordination and protection, according to Gerson De Conti, an instructor and field service representative from MTS-Forward, the local shop on LSA Anaconda.

The command station operator monitors the movement of the mobile units on his computer screen and provides guidance and direction through a list of programmed messages.

De Conti provided technical support and taught the mobile unit course to the element's Soldiers in Kuwait before the unit's movement into Iraq.

"I wish other units utilized the MTS in the same fashion. The skills we taught in the basic courses are perishable. If operators don't keep current they could loose an important communication and force protection tool," De Conti said.

Mobile units are made for all military vehicles including aircraft. During the vehicle installation the training section provides a hands-on instruction of the system, including the operation, tricks of the trade and trouble-shooting. Installing the unit takes about 2 hours.

The training is for all unit members and familiarizes everyone with the system, from privates to commanders.

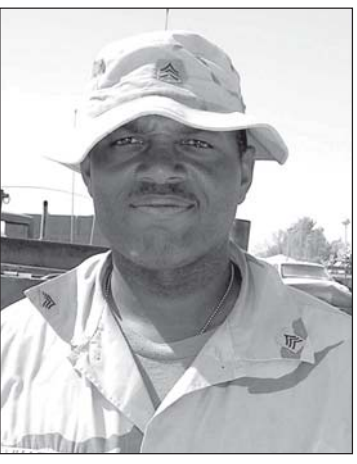
Units that require installation or training in the mobile units or control stations can contact MTS-Forward, here on LSA Anaconda, by calling DVNT 558-3109, in bldg. 4045.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class William Appleby

Capt. Twyla Shaw, medical operations officer, 118th Medical Battalion (AS), conducts checks with the command station prior to the beginning of a Mobile Tracking System exercise held recently by the 118th Med. Bn. with their units throughout Iraq.

Question of the Week

What are your plans when you go home?



Sgt. Roderick Whatley
84th Engineer Battalion

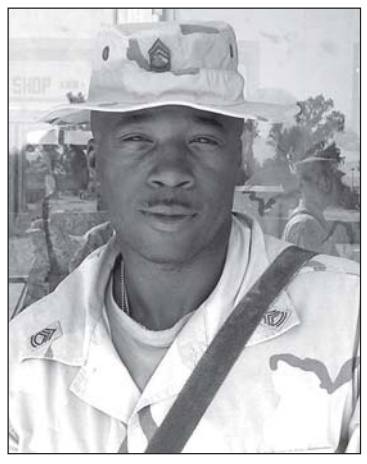
"Use my own shower and bathroom without having to see twenty guys. Then go to the beach."

Lance Cpl. Derek Leslie
8th Engineer Support Battalion

"Hug and kiss my wife, I guess. I don't know, it's such a long time away."

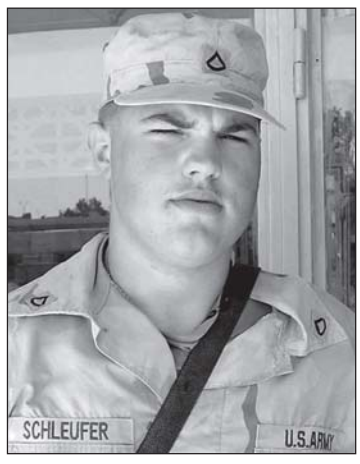
Staff Sgt. Everado Armendariz
332nd Expeditionary Communication Squadron

"Have a barbeque and a beer with my family."



Sgt. 1st Class James Bowman
120th Infantry Regiment (Mechanized)

"Just sit back and relax a little bit."



Pfc. Kristofer Schleufer
84th Engineer Battalion

"Go to sleep."

Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

Extending a helping arm

Sgt. Sean Donovan, 362nd Military Police Detachment, responded to an announcement made on Aug. 1 that the 31st Combat Support Hospital in LSA Anaconda was in urgent need of a specific blood type. Although only 14 units of blood were needed, over 80 people responded to the call, and the CSH had to turn away potential donors, since whole blood is only stable for 24 hours.

Custom made

Date: Aug. 10-11, 2004
Time: 8 p.m.
Location: Outdoor Pool

Ambassadors of
HOLLYWOOD

Miller-Lite Cat Fight Girls

$Joe Millionaire$

Featuring the Miller-Lite Cat Fight Girls

Tanya Ballinger & Kitana Baker

and Joe Millionaire

Evan Marriot

Date: ***Aug. 15, 2004***

*** 1 - 3:30 p.m. at the PX**
*** 6 - 7:45 p.m. at DFAC 4**
*** 8 - 11:30 p.m. at Sustainer Theater**

LSA Anaconda Swim Suit Standards

IAW MNC-I Uniform Policy, CSM-001

Authorized personnel may swim only in authorized swimming areas in appropriate swim attire.

Males:
- Baggy Shorts
- Service PT Shorts
- Swim Trunks

Females:
- One-Piece Bathing Suit
- PT Shi rt with PT Shorts
- Two-Piece "Sport" Swim Suit

Speedos, bikinis or thong bikinis are prohibited.

Applicable to all users of LSAA Pools. Violators will not be allowed in pool areas.

Night swimming

By Pfc. Abel Trevino
Staff writer

Between the glow of moonlight and the blue hue of lights from beneath the water, the 10-meter diving platform at the outdoor swimming pool appears taller than it does in the day. At night, a black background envelops the platform and divers hang in an oblivion of nothingness before crashing into the glassy indigo water.

Night swimming is occuring here at LSA Anaconda. Some prefer to swim at night because it's cooler than the daytime heat, others prefer the smaller crowds and for some, it's the only time they have the opportunity.

"I spend all day in the sun [at work], so it's relaxing to cool down when I [swim] in the evening," said Spc. Inja Gordon, a night swimmer from the 299th Forward Support Battalion.

Gordon, a former lifeguard and experienced swimmer, swims laps at night and races friends in the deeper end of the pool. For experienced swimmers such as she, there are less people swimming at night to cause turbulence in the water, Gordon said.

Novice swimmers should not be wary of the pool.

"It's well lit [at night], especially for the non-experienced swimmers," Gordon said.

Primary dangers of the pool are a result of poeple using careless behavior.

Many non-experienced swimmers take a jump from the 10-meter platform, unaware or uncaring of possible dangers.

"Unless you know what you're doing, it's dangerous to jump off the third tier. If you land at the wrong angle you can really hurt yourself," said Gordon.

In the event of injury, the night lifeguards are prepared to handle emergency situations.

"We know first aid and [cardio-pulmonary resuscitation] and if they cannot be helped anymore [by us], we call [emergency medical services]," said Kim Guillermo, night lifeguard.

Most night injuries occur because of easily avoided safety violations.

"At night, people will jump without permission from a lifeguard," Guillermo said. "Sometimes, they do stupid things. Like they will jump with their friends waiting [in] the water [near where they land]."

The injuries are few and far between because most people go just to wade in the water and participate in water sports.

"Most of the time, people play volleyball, basketball and dive," Guillermo said.

Guillermo enjoys his job, and said that it's fun to watch as many as 500 people a night have fun, although he is always looking out for their safety.

As far as the night swimmers are concerned, the environment has a different feel from the day environment.

"It seems like it's safer at night," said Sgt. Matthew Budagher of the 29th Signal Battalion. "It's nice to get away from the [war] even though we're still here."

Although they are in the middle of a combat zone, night swimming in the clear water underneath the black depths of the sky surrounded by the sounds of splashing and laughter allows Soldiers to temporarily forget the dangers and relax.

Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

Spc. Inja Gordon, 299th Forward Support Battalion, swims a few laps at night.

Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

Experienced swimmers take advantage of the lanes being open and clear for training and leisure laps.

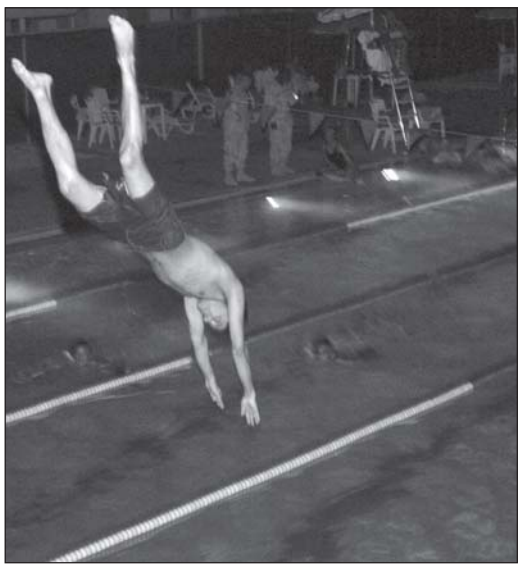


Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

A Soldier flings himself from the 10-meter platform toward the water. Diving is one of the primary activities that draws people to the outdoor pool at night.

Photo by Pfc. Abel Trevino

A group of Soldiers play basketball in the outdoor pool on a hot August night.

Photo by Spc. James Truitt

Well into the night, night swimmers participate in a water volleyball game, one of the many activities the outdoor pool has to offer, both in the day and at night.

Meteoroids in space

... since Civil War, will spice up summer's Perseid meteor shower

By Dr. Tony Phillips
NASA Marshall Space Flight Center

Courtesy photos

Photographer Nathalie Dautel caught this Perseid streaking through the Milky Way in 2001.

The annual Perseid meteor shower is here, and forecasters say it could be unusually good.

The shower began, gently, in mid-July when Earth entered the outskirts of a cloud of debris from Comet Swift-Tuttle. Dust-sized meteoroids hitting the atmosphere streak across the night sky, at first only a sprinkling, just a few each night, but the rate builds each night and by Thursday when the shower peaks, sky watchers can expect to see dozens, possibly even hundreds of meteors per hour.

This is a good year for Perseids, for two reasons, explained Bill Cooke of the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center. First, the moon is new in mid-August; moonlight won't spoil the show. Second, in addition to the usual shower on Thursday, there might be an extra surge of meteors on Wednesday caused by a filament of dust newly drifting across Earth's orbit.

The filament, like all the rest of the dust in the Perseid cloud, comes from Comet Swift-Tuttle. The difference is, the filament is relatively young. It boiled off the comet during the Civil War, in 1862.

Other dust in the cloud is older (perhaps thousands of years old), more dispersed, and responsible for the month-long shower that peaks on Thursday. The filament will eventually disperse, too, but for now it retains some of its original ribbon-shape.

If predictions are correct, Earth will plow through the filament on Wednesday at 2100 UT (5 p.m. EDT). This will produce a surge of mostly-faint meteors over Europe and Asia.

Observers might see "as many as 200 meteors per hour," said Cooke, who recommends getting away from city lights to watch the flurry.

(Note: Perseids favor northern latitudes. Because of the way Comet Swift-Tuttle's orbit is tilted, its dust falls on Earth's northern hemisphere. Meteors stream out of the constellation Perseus, which is barely visible south of the equator.)

Later that night, observers in North America can see the "traditional Perseid peak" caused by the older dust from Swift-Tuttle.

"Expect 40 to 60 meteors per hour, some of them bright," Cooke said.

The best time to look for these "traditional Perseids" is during the hours before dawn on Thursday. Set your alarm for 2 a.m.; go outside; lie down on a sleeping bag with your toes pointed northeast. You'll soon see meteors racing along the Milky Way.

Can't wake up at 2 a.m.?

Try looking around 9 or 10 p.m. on Wednesday when Perseus is hanging low in the eastern sky. You won't see many meteors then, but the ones you do see could be memorable.

Shooting stars that emerge from the horizon and streak horizontally through the atmosphere are called "Earthgrazers." Slow and colorful Earthgrazers are a good target for city dwellers, because they are so bright.

Dust from Comet Swift-Tuttle hits Earth. What about the comet itself?

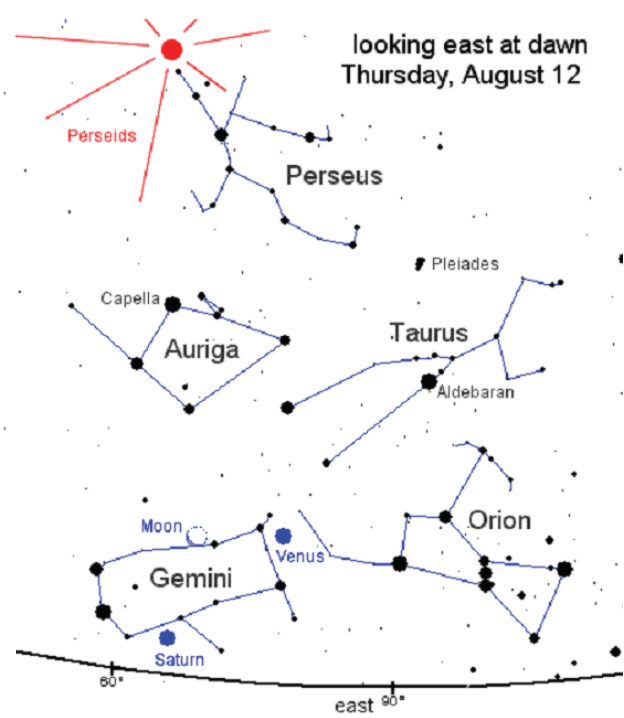
Americans Horace Swift and Louis Tuttle, working independently, discovered the comet in 1862, and they watched the Aug. 11 filament billow into space. Three years later Giovanni Schiaparelli (of Martian "canali" fame) realized it was the source of the Perseid meteors. He understood that the comet could come close to Earth, but in those days no one worried about such things.

The idea that comets and asteroids might threaten our planet was not widely accepted until the 1980s. Then astronomers began to worry.

Comet Swift-Tuttle is big, about the same size as the asteroid that wiped out dinosaurs 65 million years ago, and as recently as 1992 it seemed that Swift-Tuttle might strike Earth in the year 2126. New data and calculations show otherwise, though. There's no danger of a collision for at least a millennium and probably much longer.

So relax. Enjoy the show. Perseids are harmless … and beautiful. This is an unusually good year to see for yourself.

(Editor's note: The Science Directorate at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center sponsors the Science@NASA web sites. The mission of Science@NASA is to help the public understand how exciting NASA research is and to help NASA scientists



The pre-dawn sky on Aug. 12. The Perseid radiant is denoted by a red dot. While you're looking for meteors, check out Venus and the crescent Moon, too, near the horizon. The best time to look for these "traditional Perseids" is during the hours before dawn on Thursday. (Note: Perseids favor northern latitudes. Because of the way Comet Swift-Tuttle's orbit is tilted, its dust falls on Earth's northern hemisphere. Meteors stream out of the constellation Perseus, which is barely visible south of the equator.)